

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS DJIBOUTI 000008

SIPDIS

STATE/GENEVA PASS TO USAID; NAIROBI PASS TO REDSO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [EAID](#) [EFIN](#) [DJ](#) [SZ](#)

SUBJECT: MINISTER OF COMMERCE SEEKS SUPPORT FOR TRADE ROUND TABLE

1. (U) SUMMARY: On Sunday, January 2, the Ambassador met with Djibouti's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Saleban Omar Oudine, at his request. The main purpose of the meeting was to solicit the Embassy's financial support for a Round Table to promote trade. In addition, the Minister requested that USAID facilitate the Round Table, which would take place sometime after the April presidential election. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) The Ambassador met, on January 2, with Djibouti's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Saleban Omar Oudine, at his request. She was joined by the acting Pol/Econ Officer and an interpreter. The main purpose of the meeting was to solicit the Embassy's financial support for a proposed Round Table to promote trade, implement reform of Djibouti's commercial code and help assure confidence by investors in the fairness of Djibouti's judicial system.

3. (U) Conference participants would discuss implementation of a recent commerce development study that recommended Djibouti improve its investment climate, including liberalizing its trade code and improving its commercial code. The intent, he said, is to "put all the tools in place to give confidence to investors," before the opening of the Port of Dorale in the summer of 2005. The Minister said he saw the Round Table as a way to help the country modernize Djibouti's few exportable industries, namely salt and fish. The Minister said the government would solicit projects during the Round Table, although he was unclear who would be the conference's target.

4. (U) Oudine asked for the Ambassador's support of his request to have USAID facilitate the Round Table. He said he already discussed this possibility with a USAID representative in Geneva at a recent conference in that city o/a November 28. The other possible facilitators would be the French Cooperation Office in Djibouti and The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), although UNDP is not favored as it already is a partner in the Round Table project. The Minister said that, in addition to UNDP and the French Cooperation, there are four obvious candidates for financial support of the Round Table: The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the International Cooperation Center (CCI), and another UN group.

5. (U) The Ambassador told the Minister the Round Table project seemed very broad, and that pulling the requisite number of experts together might be difficult in a short amount of time. She added that she would like to be supportive of the project as it touches a principal area on which she plans to focus in the coming year: "the economic prosperity and development of Djibouti." She agreed to discuss the project with USAID country director Janet Schulman when she returns to post next week and requested more information from the Minister, in the meanwhile.

RAGSDALE